

legislature that it would not do to shrink from the infliction of physical pain until the garroters set the example in the treatment which they accorded to their victims. Something of this sort is discernible in the controversy which has recently occupied the Board of Education in New York, as to the repeal of the by-law prohibiting corporal punishment in the public schools of the city. The history of this question is an instructive one. Of course, originally, and in fact until a not very remote period the injunction of the ancient sage was fully acted up to in the schools, and pupils wandered, though not at their own sweet will, under the birches. How general was the practice may be inferred from the dry statistical statement that in 1864 there were over one hundred thousand cases of corporal punishment in the male grammar schools and primary schools and departments, while only twelve principals of primary schools and departments found themselves able to maintain order without the aid of the rod. In the following year several instances of cruelty on the part of teachers in inflicting punishment came before the Board of Education and superintendents of schools, and this led to a resolution being offered in the Board, instructing the Committee on By-laws to report a resolution prohibiting corporal punishment in all the primary schools and departments. This was thought to be going a little too far, but finally the Committee reported a by-law directing that corporal punishment should be inflicted only by the principal, or by the vice-principal in the absence of the principal. The teachers, or a great many of them, protested against this radical innovation, but the regulation was adopted and went into force. The effect was at once very marked. During the first month that the by-law went into operation, November, 1865, the punishments fell off to the annual rate of 46,000, a decrease of over 50 per cent, and in subsequent months the diminution continued. In 1866 the whole number of punishments in all the schools was but 34,000, and 64 out of 193 discarded the rod entirely. On the other hand the average rate of scholarship increased from 81 to over 84 per cent, and there was a considerable increase in the average attendance. These results were considered so satisfactory that the Board proceeded, by an unanimous vote, to abolish corporal punishment in the female schools, the primary schools, and the primary departments, leaving it in force in the male departments. Still the number of punishments declined, so that in 1867 the total number in the male department was but 13,000, 7,000 less than in the same department in the year proceeding. In 1868, it was down to 8,000, while in more than half of the schools cases of corporal punishment had entirely disappeared. Then came the decisive step. Early in 1870, a by-law was adopted, abolishing corporal punishment in the public schools.

Since that date there has been considerable change of opinion among those engaged in education. Superintendent Kiddle, who at first warmly endorsed the new regulation, in his last report "unhesitatingly recommended, in the light of a large experience as teacher and Superintendent, that the Board should re-invest the principals with the right to inflict, under proper regulations and restrictions, corporal chastisement upon their pupils." The reconsideration thus suggested resulted in a report from the Committee of Teachers, the effect of which was substantially to restore matters to the same position in which they were prior to 1870. The committee stated the result of their investigations to be that obedience to ordinary commands relating to the customary exercises is no longer prompt, and sometimes not secured at all; wilful and defiant disobedience is much more common than formerly; displays of ill temper have increased, and insolent behaviour has become more common; and generally a great falling off has been observed in the general tone of the pupils' manners and morals. The Board of Education met a few days ago to consider this report, but, after considerable discussion, the motion for its adoption was negatived by a majority, and the report was ordered to lie on the table.

The mistake into which the Board fell in 1870, and which there is now a growing disposition to correct, was in making corporal punishment absolutely impossible in any case. So long as the infliction of such punishment was simply hedged round with the most stringent regulations, the experiment worked admirably, and in most of the schools the bare knowledge that resort to this expedient was possible was found quite sufficient to restrain the pupils and render them submissive to authority, without the necessity of ever resorting to the actual exercise of the power. Masters on their part felt a pride in being able to govern their schools by more gentle expedients, and while the final resort was still open to them, one institution after another ceased to avail itself of it. But when the authority was absolutely taken from them, and the pupils became aware of the fact, a great restraint was removed, and in the case of the most disorderly class of pupils, there was frequently no alternative but to try and get them out of the schools altogether. Teachers of inferior order would probably be the first to complain

that their hands were tied. There is no doubt, we suppose, that boys can be governed without resort to corporal chastisement, but the success of such government implies instructors of a type superior to what, even under the best educational laws, is in all cases attainable. We shall not be surprised, therefore, if the Board restores the power of punishment to the masters, while requiring a faithful record of all cases in which it is exercised to be kept and forwarded at stated periods to the superintendent. Such a solution of the question, however, or indeed any satisfactory solution, will hardly be brought about by such arguments as some of the commissioners thought proper to advance. Thus a Mr. Matthewson, one of the members of the Board, commenced by holding himself up as an example of the salutary influence of corporal chastisement; had it not been for such punishment, he honestly believed he would not then have been a member of the Board. But notwithstanding his personal gratitude to the rod, he opposed the report of the Committee, because he believed that inquiry would show that the worst and most desperate criminals were men who had been subjected in their boyhood to the most frequent corporal punishment. How that fact, even if admitted, could justify the total abolition of corporal punishment in all cases, he does not seem to have thought it necessary to state. Excessive and injudicious severity is doubtless more to be deprecated than the laxity now complained of; it is the recollection of such severity in the past which has turned the current of opinion so strongly in the other direction. Nevertheless, the adoption of an entirely opposite course is not without its dangers, and if the experience in New York, as reported by the Teachers' Committee, may be accepted, the consequences in that city are already very perceptible.—*Montreal Gazette*.

2. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN NEW YORK.

Corporal punishment was abolished some three years ago in the public schools of the city of New York. Many of the teachers never adhered very strictly to the rule, and now all of them seem to have grown tired of the experiment. Several months since, a petition, signed by 1,200 of the leading teachers, was presented to the school board, asking that the power to punish their pupils with the rod be restored to them. They allege that the schools under their control have suffered greatly in discipline, and in the efficiency of their instruction during the three years that the rod has not been in use. The board has had the matter under consideration, but has not yet, we believe, reached a positive conclusion. Meantime, the question has been taken up by the press of the city and nearly all the leading papers have published editorials and correspondence on the subject. As reflecting the general spirit of the discussion, we take the following from the *Journal of Commerce*:

Few parents, however tenderly they would shield their offspring from the teacher's rod, will seriously argue that corporal punishment should be totally banished from the schools. In their partiality they may honestly think their own Ned or Willie manageable by kindness at school—though they frankly confess that he is fond of fun, high spirited, thoughtless, and not always tractable at home; but they admit that the unruly, stone-throwing, vulgar Tom and Joe, belonging to the family across the street, might be made a little better by the touch of the ferrule or strap in the hands of the master, acting *in loco parentis*. Protests against the chastisement of pupils always come from the parents of those who receive it, not from impartial and disinterested persons. The latter, representing a natural and healthful public sentiment, do not find their sympathies enlisted by stories of the birching of fractious pupils in the schools. Calling up recollections of their own youth, they know, from vivid experience, that when they received punishment they merited it; and they suppose that the same rule of sin and penalty holds good now in schools where the punitive law survives. We dare say that out of a hundred men who were whipped in the schools of twenty or thirty years ago, when the rod was the usual, accepted, and highly successful means of government, ninety-nine will now laughingly acknowledge that they deserved punishment twice as often as they got it; and they are not aware that the youth of the present day are so much sweeter tempered and more angelic in general, that they can be controlled solely by the law of love. It is one thing to reform school discipline by prohibiting the rod; it is decidedly another thing to reform juvenile human nature so as to make the rod unnecessary; and the latter is the real task to be accomplished before corporal punishment can be safely dispensed with in the schools. We would not leave this matter to be decided wholly by the teachers, though their opinion and advice are worth having. Here and there we may find a teacher, passionate, brutal, entirely incompetent to govern a school wisely and well. Such a man would be continually resorting to physical force if he could have his way. He could make the pupils fear, not love him; and on the whole, though he might maintain the most perfect order in